

Interview by Jemma Purdey with Bernadetha Saronu Mitakda, Malang, 23 October 2014

PhD, Statistics, Sydney University, 1980 cohort



[00:00:41]	<p>Born in West Papua 1951 under Dutch times. Father was village teacher with Catholic missionary school. Parents originally from Maluku. Remained in West Papua their whole lives. Sent to boarding with nuns in Merauke at age 6 years and attended Catholic schools. 12 siblings. Bernadetha was the first in her family (she is fifth in order) to attend university and the first girl in Merauke to go to university, 1971. Did not want to remain at home. Although she was not exposed to much from outside, she had a dream to see more. Aspiration to study medicine. Attended Faculty of Agriculture, Manokwari as no medical faculty in Papua.</p>	Background; childhood; early education
[00:04:58]	<p>Political situation around time of Act of Free Choice and transition from Dutch to Indonesia. Little disruption except all books were destroyed, burnt. Curriculum no longer in Dutch, now Indonesian. Already spoke Indonesian but did not read or write it until then.</p>	Act of Free Choice in West Papua, 1969
[00:08:22]	<p>Only 3 women out of 100 students. Parents did not originally approve. A girl's</p>	University life in Manokwari

	place is at home was the thinking at the time. Parents provided a living allowance. Other siblings followed her to university, including her sisters. Moved her degree at Institut Pertanian Bogor (1975-78) as part of an affiliation agreement between her university and IPB. Studied statistics.	
[00:11:17]	First time living outside Papua. Supersemar scholarship plus another from her local government. Institut Pertanian Bogor had many more women students. No solid plans about her career path. Upon completion returned to Manokwari to teach for one semester. Married and moved to Malang, E Java to live with his family.	Undergraduate studies in Bogor; moving away from Papua
[00:13:21]	Living in Malang with husband's family. Applied to Universitas Brawijaya. High need for a lecturer in statistics. Started immediately, December 1979. Teaching came naturally. Like her father and sisters.	Early career
[00:14:31]	Taught statistics in Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. Siblings living across Indonesia. Only returned to Papua to see her parents a few times.	
[00:15:28]	Son was born 1979. He accompanied her to Australia. He started kindergarten there and when they returned he was in Year 4.	Family life; children
[00:16:08]	Met English students from VSO when she was at IPB. She spoke English with them and learnt about scholarships programs. Lecturers from IPB alumni from US universities.	First interest to study overseas

[00:17:12]	From 1980 at Brawijaya lecturers have the opportunity to complete an entrance exam for Colombo Plan once a year. Australian delegates and Indonesian alumni in the team of interviewers and examiners.	Finding the pathway to Australia
[00:18:04]	English language learning from school (also Dutch and German). At UB all new lecturers must attend English language course as preparation for overseas study.	English language
[00:19:34]	After her period of probation at UB, applied and received scholarship to commence December 1983. Husband had left her before son was born, so she was single mother. Scholarship was Australian government scholarships program: International Development Program (IDP) for HUB universities. Other universities had AIDAB scholarships. Scholarship for 5 years.	Scholarship application process
[00:22:33]	Phd scholarship, 5 years, Sydney University. Prior knowledge: before departure attended AAUCS program for training and also received resources. The first Commodore computer in the Faculty came through this program. As part of AAUCS regular visits by Sydney University Dean of Agriculture, Les Balaan and Prof Mick O'Neil also from Sydney who became her supervisor.	Postgraduate studies in Australia; prior/existing connections with Australia
[00:25:32]	Very little prior knowledge of Australia. Some information from fellow student already in Australia at U Sydney, <i>Moekito</i> (now works as head of IDP Malang). Son stayed at home for the first 12 months.	Prior knowledge of Australia' arriving in Australia without child

[00:26:35]	AIDAB representatives collected a group of 100 off the plane, including others from Malang. Studied English in Sydney for 1 month only. English Preparation Course (EPC). Others took courses before departure and also for a longer period in Sydney.	Arrival and preparation in Sydney
[00:28:45]	Friends already in Sydney assisted her to find accommodation at International House. Stayed for 5 years. When son arrived she moved to a family apartment. First impressions: modern city. Food not difficult because she likes a challenge and to try new things.	Settling in; accommodation; Indonesians in Sydney; first impressions
[00:30:11]	Studies were easy. Fast-tracked to PhD, skipping some coursework requirements. Communication back home very difficult. Only by letters. No telephone in the family home. Returned to Malang to collect her son late 1984.	Studies; communication with home
[00:32:05]	Living with her son in Sydney. He attended kindergarten (5 years). Took up English very quickly. Managing childcare and study. He became very independent. Indonesian children at IH and in social circles.	Parenting and studying
[00:33:59]	Indonesian community at Sydney University still small. Many more at UNSW. Gathered socially.	Socialising
[00:34:46]	IH bus for travel around the city and also for tours outside the city. University and AIDAB also provided tours. In first year, AIDAB arranged a homestay in Taree with a family for 1 week. Living on a farm. Continued contact for some time after her visit.	Travelling; farmstay with Australian family

[00:37:20]	Completed her PhD in 5 years. Transition back to Indonesia was quite good. Her son was disappointed with the lack of cartoons on TV. He had totally lost his Indonesian language, so needed to start again. School system was different and frustrating for him. Son kept in touch with a close friend in Sydney through letters.	Transition back home
[00:39:54]	IH alumni newsletter, Sydney University alumni magazine. Relationships with supervisor remains very close. Frequent trips back (every 3-4 years) for collaborative research and teaching.	Maintaining connections
[00:41:55]	Son attended university studying IR because of his fluent English. Worked with Jakarta Post and now with International Centre for Agriculture Research.	Family
[00:43:12]	International connections and UB. Has sent her students to Sydney University for higher degrees.	Ongoing connections
[00:44:02]	Involved in projects in East Timor since 2002 with ACIAR, for rehabilitation of the Fac of Agriculture, East Timor. Training lecturers. 'Seeds of Life' research project also Australia funded (UWA), 2006-today. Has worked on several different projects within that program. Goes twice yearly. Has seen incredible changes in Dili.	Other international opportunities
[00:49:20]	Also worked for the Ministry for Agriculture, East Timor for various projects. The Minister was her former student at UB. Designing surveys and training. FAO and WHO Global fund funded programs. Worked also with Wayan Mahmudi from UB on these	International projects

	projects. Also an Australia Awards alumni.	
[00:54:15]	Collaboration with her almatmater now Universitas Negeri Papua (UNIPA), Manokwari. Family links still in Papua.	
[00:58:08]	Ongoing collaboration with Australian researchers through Seeds of Life program. Very well funded and long term commitment from government. East Timorese research workers from the program were funded to go to UB for training.	Connections with Australia
[01:00:51]	END	